

Welcome

Dear Educator,

Thank you for leading the Student Vote program for the local elections, happening throughout British Columbia this October.

We know the beginning of the school year is a busy time, and we appreciate the time you are dedicating to the program.

The Student Vote experience can foster a sense of belonging by helping students learn about themselves and understand others. This can be achieved through collaborative problem solving, exploring multiple perspectives, and setting and achieving personal and class goals.

Numerous Student Vote program evaluations have found that participating in the program has a positive impact on students' knowledge and understanding of government and elections, on their sense of civic responsibility and confidence in participating in the electoral process.

The program also provides an opportunity for students to take their newfound knowledge home and engage in conversations about the election with their family.

As part of CIVIX's current priorities for this school year, you will see an emphasis in building constructive dialogue skills among students.

Heightened social tensions, and the erosion of democratic norms around the world, only underscore the need for constructive dialogue skills. Democracy requires bridges between different perspectives.

On the following pages, you will find guiding principles for classroom discussion and activities for co-creating a 'norms of agreement' with students. Developing classroom norms with your students is a great way to ensure a safe and caring classroom environment, and encourage respectful discussion.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact our team at hello@civix.ca.

Please be sure to visit the project website for videos, slide decks, digital activity sheets and more:
www.studentvote.ca/bclocal2022

Wishing you and your students a great election,

The CIVIX Team

Acknowledgements

CIVIX is a non-partisan, national registered charity dedicated to building the skills and habits of active and informed citizenship among young people.



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We would like to thank the countless educators who, over the years, have contributed their ideas and feedback to the development of this resource.

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How to Use This Resource

This resource is intended to improve civic literacy, introduce the concepts of democracy and elections, increase awareness about government in British Columbia, and teach students how to effectively participate as responsible citizens in their community.

The lessons build upon each other, but they can also be used as stand-alone activities depending on the needs of your classroom and schedule.

Below is a brief description of the components of each lesson.

Guiding Questions:

Critical queries to bring a clear focus to the lesson and direct student learning. Share these questions with students at the beginning of the lesson to support an awareness of the overarching Learning Intentions and to enhance engagement.

Overview:

Provides a brief summary of the learning and activities of the lesson.

Learning Intentions:

Concrete knowledge and competencies that students are expected to have acquired or are working towards from the activities completed in each lesson.

Tips for Teachers:

Reminders or suggestions to assist with the delivery of the lesson along with a list of required or optional supplies and needs.

Supplies/Needs:

A list of support materials you will need for the lesson activities.

Strategies:

Each lesson has been broken down into three segments. You are encouraged to pick and choose from the strategies and related support tools based on the needs of your classroom and available time.

- **Starter:** Suggested opening activity, meant to pique interest in the topic and lesson.
- **Activities:** A series of key activities that help students understand and apply the essential concepts, and develop key competencies.
- **Consolidation:** Concluding questions and tasks to summarize and reflect on what was learned throughout the lesson.

Assessment Opportunities:

Designed to inform and guide next steps, and help teachers and students monitor their progress towards achieving the Learning Intentions.

Adaptations and Supports:

A few reminders and suggestions for language learners, culturally responsive pedagogy and accessibility as well as accommodation considerations.

Background Information for Teachers:

This information covers key terms and concepts related to the theme of the lesson. The purpose is to enhance teacher knowledge and understanding. Not all terms and concepts are covered in the lesson.

Guiding Principles for Classroom Discussion

While discussion can occur in all kinds of settings, formal and informal, the classroom affords educators the opportunity to approach discussion in a uniquely structured and intentional way. This is not to say that spontaneous or unstructured discussion is not valuable. Some of your best classroom discussions may be spontaneous.

However, with intention, preparation, and practice, educators can help students systematically build constructive discussion habits regardless of context.

Students often want to discuss thorny or controversial questions, and school is a place where this can happen effectively.

Here are some guiding principles you may want to consider within the context of classroom discussion.

Build Community

Students will be more likely to contribute to a discussion if they feel like they are in a safe and comfortable environment. Begin the year with activities that allow students to share their interests and backgrounds, and co-create a set of classroom norms (page 5).

De-Centre Yourself

Teachers are often used to doing most of the talking in a classroom. Discussion can often look like a lighthouse, with the educator at the centre engaging sequentially with students, often the most vocal in the class. The best discussion occurs when students are engaging with each other, with the teacher acting as a facilitator.

Embrace Structure

Student discussion can produce better outcomes when implemented with intention and structure, particularly at the beginning of the year as students get comfortable with their environment. Using discussion protocols can help build conversations that are more equitable and ensure more voices are heard.

Recognize Different Discussion Styles

Some students will be outgoing and chatty while others are reserved and quiet. Many will be somewhere in-between. Some students formulate their thoughts by talking, and others need to think for a bit first before they feel comfortable contributing. Taking into account these different discussion styles and using various discussion protocols will help you get the most out of these exchanges.

Go Small, Before Big

Students may initially feel more comfortable voicing their opinions in smaller groups. For any discussion, consider starting with groups of two or three before moving to larger or full class discussion. Consider trying different combinations with small groups, such as mixing reserved and outspoken students, or keeping students with similar discussion styles together. Both strategies have their pros and cons.

For more best practices and a description of different discussion protocols, please refer to CIVIX's *Constructive Discussions Guide* at www.politalks.ca

Establishing Classroom Norms

Creating classroom norms is one way to foster a sense of belonging among students and create a productive learning environment. A norms agreement helps establish guidelines about behaviour and expectations, enables students to feel safe expressing their opinions, and reduces instances of incivility.

Classroom norms that are meaningful to your students requires giving them ownership of what goes in it. Co-creation also helps students feel that their voices matter and encourages them to hold each other accountable when norms are violated.

Once established, it is helpful to review the agreement regularly to foster commitment and update it as needed.

Please use or adapt the activities below as you see fit. You will likely need to split up the activities over multiple days.

1 Hopes and Concerns (20 minutes)

This starter activity allows students to reflect on their hopes and concerns for the new school year. It is designed to promote inclusivity and give students an opportunity to be heard.

- a) Distribute several sticky notes or pieces of paper to each student. Ask students to write down 3-4 hopes for the year. One idea per sticky note.

Prompts:

- What are my hopes for the school year?
- What do I hope for my classmates?
- What would I ask my classmates to do to help make the year better?

- b) Have students post their sticky notes on a chart paper titled OUR HOPES. Alternatively, you can collect the notes from each student so that their answers are completely confidential. Afterwards, review the responses as a class and organize the ideas so that similar ones are grouped together.

- c) Now, ask students to share their concerns or fears for the new school year. Ask students to write down 3-4 concerns for the year.

Prompts:

- What are my concerns for the school year?
- What makes me anxious or uncomfortable in the classroom?
- What would I like to avoid?

- d) Have students post their sticky notes on a chart paper titled OUR CONCERNS. Alternatively, you can collect the notes from each student so that their answers are completely confidential. Afterwards, review the responses as a class and organize the ideas so that similar ones are grouped together.

2 Understanding Community and Values (30 minutes)

A strong classroom community is one in which students feel valued and respected, and empowered to take an active role in their learning environment.

- a) Review the idea of community and sense of belonging in the classroom. A **classroom community** is a space where students come together as a class to work towards the common goal of learning.

- b) Discuss the concept of **values**. Review:

- Values are things you believe are important in relation to how you live your life.
- A community's shared values influence how individuals act and interact with community members.
- Examples: empathy, respect, inclusivity, gratitude (see sample Classroom Values List, on page 8)

- c) Through a 'Placemat' activity, have students propose which values they believe are important for their classroom community. This cooperative learning strategy allows students to individually think about, record, and share their ideas in groups and then reach a consensus on the most important values.

- Divide students into four or five. You can provide each group with one large sheet of paper divided into sections (one for each student and a centre block for the final group list). Alternatively, the activity could be conducted with an online app, such as Google Docs or Jamboard.
- Ask students to write down their proposed five values in their individual space. Consider providing students with a list (sample Classroom Values List, page 8).
- Provide time for each student to share their recorded responses with the rest of their group without discussion from the other students.
- Next, have each group decide, collectively, on the five most important values and record them in the centre of the placemat — it is essential that all group members agree with the group list. Each group should also be prepared to share the reasons behind their choices.

d) Review each group's list as a class. Afterwards, create an agreed upon class list with 6 to 8 values.

3 Co-creating Norms (45 minutes)

Once students have understood the purpose of establishing classroom norms, you can give them the opportunity to co-create norms to align with the classroom values developed in Activity 2.

- Review the concept of norms. **Classroom norms** inform us of our responsibilities to the community and the ways in which we are expected to behave towards each other.
- Ask students to discuss the following questions using a Think-Pair-Share protocol.
 - Why is it important to have a shared understanding of a set of norms and expectations in the classroom?
 - What could happen if we did not have a set of classroom norms?
 - Should students be part of establishing classroom norms or should the teacher provide a list? Why?
- Divide students into groups and provide each with a Bristol board or chart paper. Assign each group one value and ask them come up with a few norms or behaviours that represent the value. Encourage students to make connections to Activity 1, and their hopes and concerns.

Prompt: What does (value) look like in the classroom?

Students can write out their value, a list of norms and any images associated with the value to create a poster.

Examples:

Empathy

- Avoid judgement, remember everyone comes from different circumstances
- Ask questions with curiosity
- If you say something that offends someone, apologize, even if the hurt was not intended

Respect

- Raise our hands before speaking
- Listen actively (e.g., be attentive, check your body language)
- Everyone has the right to pass (from answering a question)

Inclusivity

- Give everyone the opportunity to speak or share their ideas
- Interact and build friendships with all your classmates

Gratitude

- If someone shares an idea or opinion that helps your own learning, say thank you

- Post each group's poster around the classroom or in the hallway. Organize a Gallery Walk so each group can travel around to review each group's responses and add their own ideas or suggestions on the poster directly or on sticky notes.
- Review the posters and norms together as a class and develop a consolidated list of norms. You can keep them linked to the values or distinct. Some norms may relate to multiple values. Afterwards, consider posting the norms in a visible way so that you can point to them regularly.

4 Assessment (10 minutes)

Provide students with a 1-1-1 Exit card (page 9):

- What is one takeaway you have from learning about classroom values and norms?
- What is one norm that is easy for you?
- What is one norm that you know you have to work on?

Classroom Values - Sample List

- appreciation
- collaboration
- compassion
- courage
- dedication
- enthusiasm
- empathy
- friendliness
- gratitude
- honesty
- integrity
- inclusivity
- kindness
- open-mindedness
- perseverance
- positivity
- reliability
- respect
- supportive

1-1-1 Exit Card: Classroom Norms

1-1-1 EXIT CARD	
1	What is one takeaway you have from learning about classroom values and norms?
1	What is one norm that is easy for you?
1	What is one norm that you know you have to work on?

1-1-1 EXIT CARD	
1	What is one takeaway you have from learning about classroom values and norms?
1	What is one norm that is easy for you?
1	What is one norm that you know you have to work on?

Lesson 1

Government and Democracy



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the role of government?
- 2 How do different types of government compare to each other?
- 3 Why do I want to live in a democracy?

OVERVIEW

A government is made up of the people and practices put in place to manage the land, resources and people living within its borders.

In this lesson, students experience different types of governance through a tower building activity. Afterwards, students review the purpose of government and different types of government around the world. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect what they learned and wonder about government and democracy.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- describe the role of government;
- compare and contrast different types of government;
- analyze what it means to live in a democracy.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- The *Starter* activity is longer than usual and may need to be implemented on its own.

Supplies/Needs

- Supplies for building towers (Lego, toothpicks and gumdrops, or marshmallows and dry spaghetti)
- Chart paper
- Slide Deck 1
- “Government and Democracy” video
- Direction cards printed and cut (1.1)
- Access or copies of 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 for all students
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found on the project website

Starter

Tallest Tower Activity

1. Create four or more table stations and assign four to six students to each station.
2. Explain the task of building the tallest tower and provide each station with supplies. You can use Lego, toothpicks and gumdrops, or marshmallows and dry spaghetti. (Sample video: [Build a Spaghetti Tower Challenge, Holmes + Holmes](#))
3. Provide each station with one card from Activity 1.1, which details the process for each group. They must build the tallest tower based on the group member involvement described on their card. There are four suggestions:
 - *Team of 1 (dictatorship)* – Only one person is in charge and they make all the decisions without ideas from other group members. They can complete the task by themselves, or direct who they want to help or not help. They can also ask the other group members to leave the table if they want. The person in charge is the oldest person in the group.
 - *Team of 2 (oligarchy)* – Only two people will work together on the task. No one else is involved. The team of two consist of the shortest person in the group, and this person’s choice of another person from the group.
 - *Team of all, with roles (democracy)* – All group members are involved in the task. They must choose a leader and determine different roles for the rest of the group members based on consensus or majority rule.

- *Team of all, no roles (anarchy)* – All group members are involved in the task, but there are no roles or planning in advance of the task.

4. Provide groups with two minutes to plan for the task and three minutes for building.

TEACHER NOTE:

If time allows, rotate students through different stations so they get to experience more than one scenario. Keep in mind that you will need more supplies.

5. Give students time to reflect on the experience in their groups. What are the pros and cons of the style of leadership and group involvement? How did each group member feel during the process?
6. Organize a gallery walk to have students move around to each station to evaluate each tower and understand the style of group involvement. Afterwards, have each group summarize their experience.
 - What made the building process successful or unsuccessful?
 - What feelings developed among group members and why?
7. Through a whole class discussion, review factors that contribute to a positive and negative experience when working in groups. Draw from experiences in tower activity. Consider providing copies of a T-Chart so that students can make notes (Activity 1.2).

Activities

1. Using a Turn-and-Talk strategy, discuss the concept of government and the need for leadership in society (Questions are included in Slide Deck 1).

Guiding questions:

- Why do we have government? What is the role of government?
- What types of services does the government provide (e.g., education/schools, roads and highways, health care/hospitals, public transit)?
- What would happen if there were no government responsible for creating laws and ensuring order in society? (Connect it back to the *Starter* activity).

2. Using the 'Government and Democracy' video and Slide Deck 1, review some basic government types and how they can be compared (e.g., distribution of power, how leaders are chosen, access to power, individual rights).

- Dictatorship
- Oligarchy
- Democracy
- Monarchy
- Constitutional monarchy

3. In pairs, have students compare and contrast different government types across several characteristics (Activity 1.3). Review the answers as a class afterwards.

Consolidation

Ask students to fill out the exit card (Activity 1.4). Use this to structure future discussions.

- Living in a democracy means...
- One question I still have about government or democracy is...

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	Can students appreciate the importance of having a voice or being actively involved in a group? Can students identify factors that contribute to a positive process or negative process when working in groups?
Activities	Are students able to understand the role of government? Can students compare and analyze different types of government?
Consolidation	Can students recognize the importance of living in a democracy?

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terminology that students can easily understand. • Provide videos and vocabulary early for review (government, dictatorship, oligarchy, democracy, constitutional monarchy). • Link learning to prior knowledge and interests. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to think globally and make connections to their learning. • Modify terms and tasks to include more challenging and interest-based terminology.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (government, dictatorship, oligarchy, democracy, constitutional monarchy). • Provide advance access to the videos, and ensure that subtitles are on during the video. Pause video after each type of government is explained. • Encourage students to make connections to their other languages.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a variety of examples from countries around the world during discussions. • Ensure that you include countries and cultures that have meaning for your students. • Ensure that you are open and encouraging of diverse viewpoints your students may share.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are teaching virtually, consider changing the <i>Starter</i> activity to a decision-making exercise (e.g., class trip, themed day). • Consider using digital activity templates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **government** is made up of the people and institutions put in place to manage the land, resources and people living within its borders. Various types of government exist in the world.

Governments can be compared by their governance model, the number of people who have access to power, the rights and freedoms granted to citizens, and the existence of rule of law (laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently).

An **autocracy** is a type of government where political power is concentrated in the hands of one person who rules without restriction. There is no rule of law and citizens are not consulted on the decisions and affairs of the country. An autocracy can be a dictatorship or an absolute monarchy.

In a **dictatorship**, the dictator or ruling group exercises power through control of a mass movement, a political party or the military. Dictatorships often come to power through a military takeover (also known as a coup d'état). Power is then maintained without the consent of the people through a one-party state where political opposition is forbidden. Dictatorships generally restrict individual civil and political rights and there is no independent media.

The term **authoritarianism** is sometimes used to describe dictatorships. Authoritarian governments exercise forceful control over the population with no particular concern for their preferences or for public opinion.

An **oligarchy** is a type of government where power rests within a small number of people, generally individuals who are rich and powerful, often due to family lines, wealth or prominent

political or military connections (e.g., China, Venezuela). People living under oligarchic rule usually have some rights and freedoms. Similarly, an aristocracy is a form of governance where administration or power is in the hands of a special class of people. Aristocrats are connected to royal families through blood or ennoblement, whereas an oligarchy is not.

A **monarchy** is a form of government where a monarch (king or queen) is the head of state. The role of the monarch is inherited and usually lasts until death or abdication. The power of ruling monarchs can vary; in an **absolute monarchy**, a monarch retains full political power over a state and its people whereas in a **constitutional monarchy**, the role of the monarch is more symbolic. In a constitutional monarchy, the authority of the monarch is limited by a constitution, which includes the principles and laws of a nation or state, defines the powers and duties of the government and guarantees certain rights to the people living within it. A constitutional monarchy has a democratically elected government with a government leader, and a monarch who remains the head of state and performs ceremonial duties.

A **democracy** is a type of government where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making. In a direct democracy, citizens themselves vote for or against specific proposals or laws. In an indirect or representative democracy, citizens elect political representatives to make decisions on their behalf. In democratic countries, citizens have protected civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and the right to participate in free and fair elections, and run for political office. There are many different types of representative democracies around the world.

A **republic** is a sovereign state, country or government without a monarch where all members of government are elected (including the head of state), and the democratically elected government holds all political power. Similar to a constitutional monarchy, the government in a republic exercises power according to the rule of law and often has a constitution.

A **consensus democracy** uses a consensus decision-making model while developing legislation and aims to be more collaborative and inclusive by taking into account a broad range of opinions, as opposed to decisions made by majority rule. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut both have consensus governments where a group of individuals without any political party affiliation share political power.

Canada's system of government is a **parliamentary democracy** and a **constitutional monarchy**. We elect members to represent us in our federal parliament and our provincial and territorial legislatures, and the political party with the most elected representatives, usually forms government. The British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, is our head of state, represented by the Governor General at the federal level. Every act of government is done in the name of the Queen, but the authority for every act comes from the Canadian people through the Constitution. The Constitution of Canada is the highest legal ruling in the country and includes laws, decisions by judges, agreements between federal and provincial governments, traditions and our civil and political rights (the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*).

ACTIVITY 1.1: Cards for Tower Building Activity

TEAM OF 1

The oldest person in the group is the leader. They make all the decisions without getting ideas or suggestions from the rest of the group.

The leader can complete the task on their own or direct others to help. Or the leader can also choose to send group members away if they want to work quietly or without distraction. The group members must follow their orders without any objections.

TEAM OF 2

The shortest person is the leader. They can choose one person from the group to work with on the task. No one else is involved.

Only these two people will work on task. They can focus on their own interests and do whatever they think is best without any help from others.

TEAM OF MANY, WITH ROLES

All group members are involved in the task.

As a group, you must choose a leader through a vote and determine different roles for everyone. All group members should be part of the planning and decisions should be based on consensus or at least most of the group members should agree.

TEAM OF MANY, NO ROLES

All group members are involved in the task.

There is no leader in the group. No planning is allowed before the task starts. You can talk about your favourite songs or video games during the planning period.

ACTIVITY 1.2: T-Chart

Write down the factors that contribute to a positive experience and negative experience when working in groups.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE	NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY 1.3: Comparing Government Types

For each government type, circle the appropriate response for each question provided.

	CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY	DEMOCRACY	OLIGARCHY	DICTATORSHIP
Who has power?	<input type="checkbox"/> One person <input type="checkbox"/> Few people <input type="checkbox"/> All people	<input type="checkbox"/> One person <input type="checkbox"/> Few people <input type="checkbox"/> All people	<input type="checkbox"/> One person <input type="checkbox"/> Few people <input type="checkbox"/> All people	<input type="checkbox"/> One person <input type="checkbox"/> Few people <input type="checkbox"/> All people
Are government officials chosen by the people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some yes, some no	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some yes, some no	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some yes, some no	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some yes, some no
Can citizens run for political office? (Do they have access to power?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do citizens have individual rights such as freedom of speech or opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Many rights <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Many rights <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Many rights <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Many rights <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal rights
Add an image or fact for each type				

ACTIVITY 1.4: Reflection Card

Name:	
Living in a democracy means...	
One question I still have about government or democracy is...	

Name:	
Living in a democracy means...	
One question I still have about government or democracy is...	

Lesson 2

Rights and Responsibilities



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 **What rights do I have as a Canadian?**
- 2 **How does the Charter impact me and different groups?**
- 3 **Why should I be a responsible citizen?**

OVERVIEW

To be responsible citizens, Canadians need to understand their rights and obligations.

In this lesson, students explore the rights and responsibilities they have at school as an entry point to a discussion about rights and freedoms in a democracy. Students review the seven categories of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Through a scavenger hunt activity, students navigate the Charter itself and improve their understanding of its application. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the responsibilities that go along with their rights.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- describe the rights and responsibilities we have at school and explain why they are important;
- provide examples about how the Charter impacts our life, and those who belong to various groups;
- analyze connections between rights and responsibilities.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.

Supplies/Needs

- Piece of paper for each student or access to Google Jamboard
- Slide Deck 2
- Access or copies of 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.
- Online templates for all activities and any videos and slide decks are available on the project website

Starter

1. Review the idea of a 'right' and provide some examples. Rights are things that we are morally or legally allowed to do or have. For example, you have the right to learn and receive an education.
2. Using a 'Snowball Fight' strategy, have students consider the rights they have at school.
 - a) Provide each student with a piece of paper and ask them to write down one right they have at school.
 - b) Ask students to crumple their paper into a "snowball" and throw it across the room.
 - c) Have students find a snowball and write down another example on the piece of paper. It should be different from the first example.
 - d) Afterwards, have students throw their snowballs one more time and retrieve one.
 - e) Invite students to share the examples from the snowball they found and create a class list on the blackboard or whiteboard.

If you are in a remote setting, consider using a brainstorm strategy using Google Jamboard or another online tool.

3. Explain the relationship between rights and responsibilities. A responsibility is a duty, obligation or an expectation of how you should act.
4. Co-create a list of responsibilities you have at school. You may want to review your school's code of conduct for ideas. Afterwards, connect the specific student responsibilities back to the list of rights created by the class, making additions where necessary.
5. Have a whole class discussion. Guiding questions:
 - How are rights and responsibilities similar/different?
 - Why should you be aware of your rights and responsibilities?

Activities

1. Distribute Activity 2.1 to assess current knowledge about our rights in Canada.
2. As a class, review the seven categories of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. You can use either Handout 2.2 or Slide Deck 2. During the review, ask students to make connections to their own lives or provide real-world examples.
3. Ask students to complete a scavenger hunt using the summary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Activity 2.3). The purpose is to help students interpret the Charter and understand what it means for different groups. Give students time to complete it independently and then share their responses in pairs or small groups.

Consolidation

1. In pairs or small groups, ask students to consider the responsibilities that go along with specific rights using Activity 2.4. Afterwards, review as a class.
2. Have a closing discussion or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions:
 - Which rights in Canada do you think are most important and why?
 - What does it mean to be a responsible citizen?

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students differentiate between rights and responsibilities?</p> <p>Are students able to understand why they should be aware of their rights and responsibilities?</p>
Activities	<p>Can students understand the language and concepts used in the Charter?</p> <p>Can students identify real-world examples related to our rights?</p> <p>Are students using headings and key words to find relevant sections in the Charter?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Are students able to identify the responsibilities that come with our rights?</p> <p>Can students analyze which rights are most important to them?</p> <p>Can students recognize the importance of being a responsible citizen?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students' understanding of rights with real-world examples. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow students to research the original Charter document in order to familiarize themselves with the advanced language. Students could prepare case studies that demonstrate a violation of rights and freedoms in Canada. Classmates can then decide if the issue is one that is solved by using the Charter.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide definitions of key terms. Support students' understanding of rights with real-world examples.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will come from different backgrounds and have different opinions on the rights of many compared to the rights of the individual. Not all students will agree with the rights in the Charter. Ensuring a safe place for respectful discussion is encouraged. Ask students to interpret the Charter and what it means for different groups in society (e.g., women, minority groups). Encourage thinking about how the Charter supports diversity and equality. Investigate rights and responsibilities in various social and cultural settings, inclusive of First Nations peoples, and additional diverse cultural groups.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching strategy for the <i>Starter</i> activity can be replaced with a class discussion on rights and responsibilities or an online collaborative activity if there are concerns about maintaining physical distancing or limiting the shared touching of objects. Provide mobility accommodations for any activities that require movement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **right** is a legal entitlement or something that we are morally or legally allowed to do or have. Rights are often fought for and claimed (in courts or through protests) and less often simply granted. With all rights come responsibilities.

A **responsibility** is a duty or obligation. It is something you should do in order to respect and maintain certain rights.

All citizens living in a democracy have civil and political rights, which are usually articulated in a legal document as part of a constitution, such as a **bill of rights**. This document limits the powers of government, explains the freedoms that are guaranteed to all people and protects people from a government that might abuse its powers.

In Canada, our rights are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Canada's Charter is widely admired around the world and is the constitutional document most emulated by other nations.

The Charter has seven distinct categories:

- **Fundamental freedoms** include the freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression including freedom of the press and other media; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.
- **Democratic rights** include the right of every Canadian, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate in an election, the requirement that governments hold elections at least every five years, and the requirement that elected representatives meet at least once per year.
- **Mobility rights** include the right of every Canadian to choose to live and work in any province or territory in Canada. Canadians also have the right to live in, leave or re-enter Canada whenever they choose.
- **Legal rights** include the guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must be told of their right to see a lawyer and must be tried within a reasonable amount of time. Canadians are also guaranteed the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- **Equality rights** include the right of any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical ability.
- **Official language rights** include the right of all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government.
- **Minority language education** rights include the rights for French or English minorities in every province and territory to be educated in their own language under certain conditions.

ACTIVITY 2.1: What do you know about rights in Canada?








Write down whether each statement is true or false in Canada.

STATEMENT	TRUE/FALSE
Any citizen, aged 14 years and older, can vote in government elections.	
Citizens have the choice of communicating with the federal government in any language they choose.	
I have the right to say anything I want, even if it can cause harm to someone else.	
Citizens can move to any province or territory in Canada for another job.	
If I commit a crime, I will have to wait a very long time until my trial.	
Citizens can be told they cannot apply to a job if they are of a certain race.	
I have the right to protest, hold up signs, and make lots of noise for an issue I believe in.	
I have the right to go to any school I want, regardless of the language I speak and the language of the school.	
The media can report on anything at all that happens in Canada.	
I will be considered innocent if I am accused of a crime.	

ANSWER KEY: Activity 2.1 (What do you know about rights in Canada?)

STATEMENT	TRUE/FALSE	RIGHT/FREEDOM
Any citizen, aged 14 years and older, can vote in government elections.	False	Democratic Rights
Citizens have the choice of communicating with the federal government in any language they choose.	True	Official Languages of Canada
I have the right to say anything I want, even if it can cause harm to someone else.	False	Fundamental Freedoms and Equality Rights
Citizens can move to any province or territory in Canada for another job.	True	Mobility Rights
If I commit a crime, I will have to wait a very long time until my trial.	False	Legal Rights
Citizens can be told they cannot apply to a job if they are of a certain race.	False	Equality Rights
I have the right to protest, hold up signs, and make lots of noise for an issue I believe in.	True	Fundamental Freedoms
I have the right to go to any school I want, regardless of the language I speak and the language of the school.	False	Minority Language Rights
The media can report on anything at all that happens in Canada.	True	Fundamental Freedoms
I will be considered innocent if I am accused of a crime.	True	Legal rights

HANDOUT 2.2: Highlights from the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

HIGHLIGHTS	EXAMPLES
 <p>FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS</p> <p>You have the freedom to pray and worship in your own way, or not to pray or worship at all.</p> <p>You have the freedom to shape your own opinions.</p> <p>You have the freedom to express your opinions.</p> <p>The media is free to report on anything in Canada.</p> <p>You can hold rallies to express your disagreements.</p> <p>You can choose your own friends.</p>	
 <p>DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS</p> <p>If you are a citizen and 18 years old, you can vote in elections.</p> <p>If you are a citizen and 18 years old, you can compete for the job of a politician.</p> <p>The rule that governments must have elections every five years or less.</p> <p>The rule that elected governments must meet at least once every year.</p>	
 <p>MOBILITY RIGHTS</p> <p>You can live and work in any province or territory in Canada.</p> <p>You can leave and come back to Canada when you want.</p>	
 <p>LEGAL RIGHTS</p> <p>If you are arrested, you must be told of your option to see a lawyer.</p> <p>If needed, you must go to court in an amount of time that is considered fair.</p> <p>You must be considered innocent until proven guilty.</p>	
 <p>EQUALITY RIGHTS</p> <p>You cannot be treated unfairly for many reasons. This includes your race, background, religion, gender, age, or mental or physical ability.</p>	
 <p>OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF CANADA</p> <p>You can talk or write to the federal government in English or French.</p>	
 <p>MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION RIGHTS</p> <p>You may be able to go to school in English or French if you meet certain criteria.</p>	

ACTIVITY 2.3: Charter Scavenger Hunt

Using the original version or a summary of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, find information that relates to the following areas. In your own words, fill in the table below.

Describe a right you have used	Describe a right you have heard before	Describe a right that protects education
Describe a right that protects women	Describe a right that benefits the poor	Describe a right that talks about laws
Describe a right that allows citizens to choose politicians	Describe a right that protects First Nations People	Describe a right that protects immigrants
Describe a right that supports citizens being informed about current affairs	Describe a right that allows you to travel to other countries	Describe a right that allows you to express your thoughts and opinions on social media

ACTIVITY 2.4: Our Rights and Responsibilities

For each of the following rights from the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, write down a corresponding responsibility.

RIGHT	RESPONSIBILITY
I have the right to speak freely...	... and I have the responsibility to <i>not say things that would be hurtful or disrespectful to others.</i>
I have the right to protest or participate in a rally about an issue I believe in...	... and I have the responsibility to
I have the right to pray and worship in the religion of my choice, or not worship at all...	... and I have the responsibility to
I have the right to be friends with or associate with anyone I choose...	... and I have the responsibility to
I have the right to vote in an election (when I am at least 18 years of age)...	... and I have the responsibility to
I have the right to communicate in either French or English when writing or speaking with the federal government...	... and I have the responsibility to
I have the right to be treated fairly regardless of my race, background, religion, gender, age, or mental or physical ability...	... and I have the responsibility to

Lesson 3

Governments in Canada



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How is government organized in Canada?
- 2 How does government affect me?

OVERVIEW

Governments make decisions and pass laws that influences the lives of citizens. Canada has several levels of government, each with its own elected representatives and areas of responsibility.

In this lesson, students explore the roles and responsibilities within the levels of government in Canada through a variety of multi-media tools and activities.

Students analyze how government services affect them and assess the interdependence of different levels of government through a bulletin board activity. In the *Consolidation* activity, students create a postcard to share their learning with family members or caregivers.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- understand that governments are made up of elected representatives;
- identify the roles and responsibilities associated with the different levels of government; and,
- analyze how government affects us directly.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- When discussing big concepts like elected representatives and levels of government, create classroom visuals with photos or images to give students a quick reference point throughout the lesson program period. This idea has also been incorporated into the activities.

Supplies/Needs

- “Levels of Government” video
- Slide Deck 3A and 3B
- Copies of 3.1 for the small group activity, digital access or copies of 3.2 and 3.3 (or index cards)
- Scissors
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found on the project website

Starter

Using the images in Slide Deck 3A (“Who am I? What am I?”), gauge student knowledge about government and politics in Canada. Images include Queen Elizabeth, Justin Trudeau, John Horgan, the parliament buildings, the British Columbia legislature, as well as other non-political figures and places. This can be completed through class discussion, or have students jot down their answers.

Afterwards, invite students to share what they know about how government is organized in Canada or any questions they have about the topic. Consider providing each student a couple of sticky notes to write down their statements/questions and post them on a wall or on chart paper.

Activities

1. Review how government is structured in Canada using the “Levels of Government” video, followed by Slide Deck 3B to review the key concepts.

Key questions:

- What is a representative democracy?
- What are the different levels of government in Canada?
- What is the title of the elected representative at each level?
- What is the title of the leader at each level?
- How are responsibilities divided among the different levels of government?

2. Divide students into small groups to play a sorting game based on the levels of government.
 - a) Provide each group with a copy of Activity 3.1 and ask students to cut up the terms into individual pieces.
 - b) Have each group create space for three columns and title each with a heading: federal, provincial, municipal (from Activity 3.1).
 - c) Ask students to sort the terms according to each level. You can choose to present an order (e.g., leader title, representative title, government building title, responsibilities) or read out one category at a time.
 - d) Review the answers as a class.

TEACHER NOTE

There are a few terms/words that do not belong under any level. Inform students of this at the beginning of the activity.

3. Create a class bulletin board where students can identify how government services or decisions influence their lives. Students can contribute by attaching images, news articles, headlines, social media posts, and other related content. Ask each student to make two contributions and label the level of government. Students can use Handout 3.2 as a reference.

Consolidation

Provide students with an index card or postcard template (Activity 3.3). Ask students to write a postcard to their family members or caregivers summarizing one or two main points from the lesson. On the front side of the postcard, they can draw an image based on what they learned about the levels of government in Canada.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students recognize or name current politicians and institutions?</p> <p>Are students able to share their existing knowledge or pose questions about what they want to learn?</p>
Activities	<p>Are students asking questions about the levels of government?</p> <p>Are students able to distinguish between the roles and responsibilities among different levels of government?</p> <p>Can students make connections between government services and their own lives?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Can students summarize their learning to their family members or caregivers?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide examples or images of different responsibilities (e.g., defence – soldiers). • Share the "Levels of Government" video before class discussions and activities. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to identify an issue that concerns them the most in the community. Ask them to contact the appropriate elected representative (it could be more than one) expressing their concerns. This could be completed by email or social media.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide examples or images for each area of responsibility. • Have strong students describe responsibilities in their own words to Language Learners. • Ensure that subtitles are on during the videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the demographic data of one or more elected bodies and discuss the need for more diversity in politics. • Discuss specific political issues facing your community and make connections to the levels of government. • Review the governance structure of a First Nations community relevant to your students.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trivia game for the <i>Starter</i> could also be conducted through an online platform (e.g., Kahoot, Google Forms). • If you are in a virtual setting, you can use Google slides for the sorting game and bulletin board activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Canada is a federal state, parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.

A **federal state** brings together a number of different political communities with a central government (federal) for general purposes and separate regional governments (provincial/territorial) for regional/local purposes.

The division of powers is based on the idea that the level of government closest to the issue governs it. The distribution of responsibilities is found in Sections 91-95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The **federal government** takes responsibility for the whole country and matters of national concern, such as the armed forces, international relations and trade, currency, fisheries and oceans, criminal law and public safety. **Provincial and territorial governments** are responsible for their own province or territory and issues such as education, health care delivery, social welfare, transportation and highways.

Municipalities and regional districts, collectively known as **local governments**, receive their powers from their respective provincial or territorial governments. These governments handle local matters, such as water and sewage, garbage and recycling, public transit, local parks and recreation.

There are also other forms of government in some Indigenous communities or First Nations reserves. **Indigenous governments** often share certain responsibilities with the government of their province/territory and the federal government.

The term **self-government** refers to a First Nation, Métis or Inuit community with control over its own affairs. The level of autonomy varies, but federal and provincial laws still apply and the

other levels of government will often work together for the benefit of all community members. Self-governing First Nations have the ability to sign treaties (formal agreements) with the various levels of the Canadian federal government (referred to as Crown). Comprehensive land claims agreements (modern treaties) between Canadian governments and First Nations often result in Indigenous peoples having greater autonomy to choose their own method(s) of representation and decision-making.

For some issues, the different levels of government have to work together and share the responsibility.

For example, federal, provincial and local governments are concurrently responsible for the environment. The federal government enforces the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and regulates waterways used for fishing and shipping. Provincial governments regulate land use, mining, manufacturing and harmful emissions. Local governments are responsible for zoning, garbage disposal, and sewage and water treatment.

Each level of government has elected officials to represent the people (constituents) living in their designated areas (e.g., electoral districts, municipalities). Elected representatives are responsible for proposing, studying, debating and voting on bills (potential laws), and raising issues put forward by their constituents.

Representatives at the federal level are called **Members of Parliament** (MPs). Representatives at the provincial level in British Columbia are called **Members of the Legislative Assembly** (MLAs).

At the municipal level in British Columbia, elected representatives are called councillors. In unincorporated areas in British Columbia, elected representatives are called **electoral area directors** and they sit on the regional district board.

Most federal and provincial elected representatives, and some municipal officials belong to a political party. A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared vision and political ideology whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change.

The leader of the federal government is called the **prime minister**, whereas **premier** is the title given to the leader of the provincial government. At both levels of government, the leader of the political party with the greatest number of elected representatives in the legislative body usually assumes the role of the leader of that government. Therefore, we do not vote for the position of premier or prime minister directly.

In British Columbia municipalities, the head of council is called a **mayor**. The head of council is elected at large, which means by all the people in the municipality. The head of regional district board is called a chair and they are selected among the members of the regional district board.

As a constitutional monarchy, Canada's head of state is a hereditary sovereign (queen or king) who reigns in accordance with the Constitution. The sovereign is represented in Canada by the **governor general**, who is appointed by the sovereign on the advice of the prime minister.

In each of the ten provinces, the sovereign is represented by a **lieutenant governor**, who is appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister. Usually, the governor general and lieutenant governors serve five-year terms. There is no sovereign representative at the local level.

In Canada's three territories, territorial commissioners serve a similar role to a lieutenant governor. Commissioners do not represent the sovereign, however. They are appointed by and represent the federal government.

ACTIVITY 3.1: Levels of Government – Sorting Game

FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	LOCAL
education	Member of Parliament	international trade
Our city/town	Parliament Buildings	mayor
Prime Minister	councillor	national defence
Member of Provincial Parliament	Victoria	Member of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Assembly	Premier	highways
president	House of Commons	Ottawa
Quebec City	local parks	hospitals
public transit	Vancouver	city/town hall
First Nations lands & rights	citizenship & passports	garbage & recycling
social services	fire protection	road maintenance

HANDOUT 3.2: Government Responsibilities

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES
 Citizenship and passports	 Colleges and universities	 Animal control
 Criminal law	 Drivers' licensing and highways	 Fire protection
 Currency	 Education	 Land use planning (zoning)
 Federal taxes	 Hospitals and healthcare delivery	 Local parks
 Fisheries and oceans	 Municipalities	 Local police
 Foreign affairs and international trade	 Natural resources	 Road maintenance
 First Nations lands and rights	 Property and civil rights	 Recreation and community facilities
 National defence	 Provincial law and courts	 Public transportation
 Official languages	 Provincial taxes	 Waste management
 Postal service	 Social services	 Water supply and treatment
 Veterans affairs		

ACTIVITY 3.3: Postcard Template

POSTCARD

SEND TO:

POSTCARD

SEND TO:

Lesson 4

Informed Citizenship



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How does information influence my decisions?**
- 2 What are the opportunities and challenges of using online platforms?**
- 3 How can I make sure to hear different perspectives on important issues?**

OVERVIEW

Being a responsible citizen involves seeking out information from a variety of sources and comparing perspectives on issues of importance.

In this lesson, students experience the relationship between the information we consume and the decisions we make through a hands-on interactive activity. Before participating in a mock local election, students learn about the candidates and election issues by reviewing information from one of two polarized social media feeds. After the vote, students discuss how what they read may have influenced their decision. Next, students learn about how the internet has changed the way we consume and share information, and discuss the importance of being exposed to different perspectives when analyzing issues and events.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- analyze how news and information can influence our opinion on people, events and issues;
- describe how algorithms personalize the information we see online;
- evaluate the opportunities and challenges associated with receiving information through online platforms; and,
- describe strategies for being an informed citizen and accessing multiple viewpoints.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class. If you want to focus on sources of information and different perspectives only, you can skip Activities 2 and 3.
- Although students are not necessarily on social media, learning about the challenges early on is important. The underlying message about being exposed to different perspectives is important regardless.

Supplies/Needs

- Computers and access to the internet for the *Feed for Thought: Election Edition* (newsliteracy.ca, requires free registration), if proceeding with the online version of the activity
- Social media feeds (online version) or copies of the PDF feeds (printed version)
- Slide Deck 4
- Paper ballots on 4.1 (if desired), copies of 4.2 or digital access for students
- “Behind the Screens: Who decides what I see online?” video or “Algorithms and Filter Bubbles” video
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found at the project website

Starter

Start with an opening conversation about sources of information. Ask students to discuss in pairs or small groups, before a wider discussion as a class.

- Where do you get your news and information? Where do you learn about developments happening in the world?
- Which sources of information do you think are most trustworthy and why?
- Do you think it is important to be informed about issues in your community? Why or why not?

Activities

1. Complete the *Feed for Thought: Election Edition* activity found at the CIVIX website newsliteracy.ca. The activity can be completed with online scrollable newsfeeds (requires creating a class and assigning the activity) or using the paper version of the newsfeeds.

- a) **Introduce the Scenario.** There is a high-stakes election coming up, and you are going to vote in it. There are two candidates to choose from, and people in your community feel strongly about who should win. It will likely be a close race. Before you cast your ballot, you will learn about the candidates and election issues by reviewing information to help make your choice. The newsfeed has a mix of articles from the media and posts from friends and community members.
- b) **Read the Feeds.** Distribute the link provided by the online system and it will randomly assign students one of the two feeds (each feed supports one of the two candidates). Alternatively, print and shuffle the two paper feeds and hand them out. Do not inform students about the two different feeds. Give students 15 minutes to review the information.
- c) **Vote.** Have students vote for the candidates. For the digital activity, use the online voting button located at the bottom of the social media feed. You can access the results from your newsliteracy.ca dashboard. You may also use a show of hands, or a paper ballot (Activity 4.1). Announce the vote totals to the class.
- d) **Debrief.** Through a whole-class discussion, ask students why they voted the way they did and what information shaped their decision.

Over the course of the discussion, it should become obvious that some students were provided with different information than others. At an appropriate point in the discussion, share the fact that there were two different newsfeeds. You can also review the feeds side-by-side to compare the differences (preview links are available newsliteracy.ca).

Further questions to prompt discussion:

- How did you feel about the results of the vote before you knew there were two different newsfeeds? Were you surprised by the outcome? Why or why not?
- How might two people end up with such different newsfeeds?
- What are the consequences of people consuming different facts and opinions?
- Do you think people should be exposed to different perspectives or more than one side of an issue before making their decision?

2. Watch the “Behind the Screens: Who decides what I see online?” video and/or the "Algorithms and Filter Bubbles" video, and/or review Slide Deck 4 to introduce the concepts of algorithms and filter bubbles, and the effects of online platforms.

TEACHER NOTE

The content in the videos is very similar. You can choose either option, or both.

3. Divide students into pairs for a discussion about their own experiences. Key questions:
 - Have you ever noticed information or advertisements online that were based on your previous internet searches?
 - How do algorithms personalize your internet experience?
 - What happens if we only see information we like or agree with?

Consolidation

In small groups, ask students to respond to one or more of the following questions. Afterwards, discuss the responses as a class. To focus the discussion further, the class may choose one current news event from which to draw examples.

- Why is it important to think critically about online information?
- What are the opportunities and challenges of getting information through online platforms?
- How can we make sure we are informed citizens and consider different viewpoints?

Assessment Activity

Ask students to fill out the ‘1-1-1 Exit Card’ (Activity 4.2).

- What is one key takeaway from today?
- What is one action you may take based on what you learned?
- What is one question you still have?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

As citizens living in a democracy, we have a responsibility to stay informed about the issues that matter to us and to society. This is true all the time, but especially when we must make a meaningful choice at the ballot box.

The introduction of the internet and the rise of social media have been significant for news and information, and complicated for citizens.

Where traditional news organizations were once the **gatekeepers** of information and the only ones with the resources to disseminate it — printing presses and TV stations are costly to purchase and operate — the internet allows anyone, anywhere to be a publisher.

The rise of blogging and social media a generation ago was widely viewed as the democratization of information, bringing new voices into public

discourse and leading to positive social change. The reality of online communication has been more complex.

When news came only from traditional or **legacy media** — newspapers, TV, and radio — there was always someone who stood between audiences and information, a person or process that filtered the stories or content, checked facts and packaged stories for public consumption.

Where human editors and producers were once the only gatekeepers who decided what news audiences saw, on the internet, that job belongs to **algorithms**, which are sets of instructions that tell computers how to perform specific tasks, like sorting information.

Social media algorithms work in such a way that we are more likely to see content that is similar to what we already like or agree with. Our social media feeds never give the whole picture.

Since people have become such heavy adopters of **social media**, they now rely on these sites (such as Facebook or TikTok) for news. The problem is that social media platforms never intended to be news organizations, and there are consequences for informed citizenship when people rely on friends and the results of algorithms to find out about what is happening in the world.

Informed citizenship involves seeking out news and information from a variety of sources, comparing perspectives and keeping up with new developments. There are things you can do to make sure you are informed, particularly when there is so much information available online.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students identify where they get their news and information?</p> <p>Can students explain why it is important to be informed about issues in their community?</p>
Activities	<p>Can students explain why they voted the way they did, and what information shaped their decision?</p> <p>Can students identify the consequences of people being presented with different facts and opinions?</p> <p>Can students explain how algorithms personalize our internet experience?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Can students describe the opportunities and challenges of getting information through online platforms?</p> <p>Can students communicate how they can be informed citizens and consider different viewpoints?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., online platforms, algorithms, filter bubbles). • Share the “Behind the Screens” and/or “Algorithms and Filter Bubbles” videos before class discussions and activities. • Use ability grouping to support students. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the opportunity for alternative research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Starter</i> segment: Where do your friends/family get their information? - <i>Activities</i> segment: Compare your social media feed(s) with those of your friends/family. How are they different? How are they the same? • Encourage students to relate concepts to current affairs and make connections to their thinking. • Modify terms and tasks to include terminology that is more challenging. Consider providing the words or information from the <i>Background Information for Teachers</i> section.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Share the “Behind the Screens” and/or “Algorithms and Filter Bubbles” videos before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during the videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may come from households with varying access to the internet, and have different levels of familiarity with social media. Not all students will have prior knowledge of the social media feeds being emulated in the ‘Feed for Thought’ activity. • Encourage students to share their own experiences with online platforms and social media. • Ensure that you are open and encouraging of diverse viewpoints your students may share.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

ACTIVITY 4.1: Voice your choice!

Use the sample ballots below to conduct a vote for the candidates running for election. Tabulate the results and announce them to the class.

WENDY ABBOTT	<input type="radio"/>
TRACY BELL	<input type="radio"/>

WENDY ABBOTT	<input type="radio"/>
TRACY BELL	<input type="radio"/>

ACTIVITY 4.2: 1-1-1 Exit Card

1-1-1 EXIT CARD	
1	What is one key takeaway from today?
1	What is one action you may take based on what you learned?
1	What is one question you still have?

1-1-1 EXIT CARD	
1	What is one key takeaway from today?
1	What is one action you may take based on what you learned?
1	What is one question you still have?

Lesson 5

My Community



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the features of municipalities and regional districts?**
- 2 How has the physical environment shaped my community?**
- 3 What actions can be taken to improve my community and why?**

OVERVIEW

Municipalities and regional districts provide essential local services and are responsible for the planning, growth and well-being of their community through the adoption of by-laws and policies.

In this lesson, students review the composition and function of local governments in British Columbia, and gather information about their own municipality or regional district. Through a self-directed project, students work independently or collaboratively with a partner to create an action plan to improve their community. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the different proposals developed by their classmates and the importance of being an active member in the community.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- explain the structure and function of local government in British Columbia;
- analyze how the physical environment has shaped life and work in our community;
- identify ways to improve our community and analyze the possible outcomes of specific actions;
- evaluate different community proposals and why it is important to be an active member of the community.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.

Supplies/Needs

- Slide Deck 5
- Access or copies of 5.1 and 5.2.
- Any videos, slide decks, handouts and activity sheets in Word and Google Doc can be found on the project website

Starter

Using a Think-Ink-Pair-Share protocol, invite students to consider three things they like about their community.

Questions to prompt discussion:

- What makes it special? What makes it different from other places?
- What makes it a good place to live?
- Why do people come to live here or visit?

Give students four minutes to brainstorm and jot down a response, four minutes to share with a partner and then have each pair share with the rest of the class.

Activities

1. Use Slide Deck 5 to review the structure and function of local governments in British Columbia.
2. Ask students to investigate their own municipality using the official website and other sources. If you live in an unincorporated area, explore your regional district's website. In pairs, have students fill out Activity 5.1 (or 5.2 for Regional Districts).
 - What is the name of our municipality and/or regional district?
 - What are some interesting facts?
 - What are some landforms and waterways in our community?
 - How does the physical environment affect where people live and how they live? How does it influence jobs and businesses?
 - What are some recent announcements by our municipality or regional district?

3. Through a whole class discussion, pose one or more of the following questions to your students.

- Can you identify any problems or challenges in our community?
- Do you see any opportunities for improvement?
- What actions could be taken to make a positive change in our community?
- How can we share/protect the natural resources in our community? How can we create a more sustainable community?

4. Using Activity 5.3, ask students to create an action plan to make a positive change or improve sustainability in their community. This can be completed independently, in pairs or small groups. Guiding questions:

- What is the issue you would like to focus on?
- What are the underlying factors or causes related to the issue?
- What actions would you suggest and why?
- How could the municipality or regional district help? How could community members play a role?
- Which members from the community would benefit from the plan and how?
- Could some members of the community be impacted negatively? If so, how?

5. Have students present their action plan through any format they choose – it could be an op-ed article, poster, video, slide deck or diorama.

Consolidation

Have students reflect on the proposals put by their peers. Either have a class discussion or ask students to write a response to the following prompts.

- I liked _____'s idea. It helped me realize...
- It is important to be an active community member because...
- One way I can be an active community member is...

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students explain what they like about their community?</p> <p>Can students think critically about what makes their community unique?</p>
Activities	<p>Are students asking questions about their municipality or regional district?</p> <p>Can students analyze how the physical environment in their community influences jobs and way of life?</p> <p>Can students make connections between their community and their own lives?</p> <p>Can students identify any challenges or opportunities for change in their community?</p> <p>Can they analyze different actions that can be taken to make a positive change in their community?</p> <p>Can students assess who would be impacted by these changes and how?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Can students evaluate the proposals provided by their classmates and provide reasoning?</p> <p>Can students understand why it is important for community members to take an active role in their community and/or how they can?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written work can be presented orally. • Guide students and provide extra time when working with primary and secondary resources. • Use ability grouping to support students. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge students by asking them to take on a more detailed action plan project, such as a diorama or extensive slide presentation. • Students could also explore the demographics of the community to draw deeper conclusions about industry and daily life, and compare it to another municipality in the province.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to explore home communities as well as the community in which they now live.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the community, students could choose to focus on a particular ethnic or religious group and see how they fit into the larger community. • Focus local government research on programs and services for children and youth in the community. • If applicable, encourage students to explore nearby First Nations communities, and their changes over time, or how these communities fit into the larger community. • Analyze how First Nations perspectives on land use have influenced the idea of sustainability.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming. • The artwork/media for the action plan can be created and shared in a digital format.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Municipalities and **regional districts** provide British Columbians with essential local services, such as clean water, sewage systems, parks and recreation, and fire protection. These local governments are responsible for the planning, growth and well-being of their community through legislation, by-laws and policies.

There are 162 **municipalities** in British Columbia, covering approximately 89 per cent of the province's population. Municipalities range in population size, from small villages of 100 people to large cities with more than 600,000 people. Based on population and geographic area, there are four classes of municipalities: **villages, towns, districts** and **cities**.

The purposes of a municipality include:

- Providing for good government of its community;
- Providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit;
- Providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community; and
- Fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.

Municipalities have the authority to establish a wide range of services under the Community Charter and other provincial legislation. Most of the time whether or not to provide a particular service is the municipal council's choice.

Property taxes are established by each municipality and may vary, based on the type of property owned. Each year, municipalities determine how much money they need to collect from property taxes to contribute to the cost of services, and determine the tax rate based on that amount.

The local government system in British Columbia is unique in Canada. In addition to municipalities, it is composed of 27 **regional districts**, covering almost the entire province. Regional districts range in population from under 4,000 to over two million people.

Regional districts were created to support cooperation and equitable cost-sharing between municipal areas and rural areas. Regional districts are modeled as a federation composed of municipalities, unincorporated areas (electoral areas), and in some cases, Treaty First Nations, each of which have representation on the regional district board.

Like municipalities, regional districts have a similar purpose and the broad authority to operate any service that the board of directors considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the regional district. Some of the more common services provided by regional districts include: water supply, sewers, fire protection, parks and recreation, solid waste management, economic development, animal control, public housing, libraries, emergency services and airports.

Municipal councils are the democratically elected bodies to make decisions on behalf of the municipality, and are accountable for those decisions to their community. They are comprised of a head of council called a **mayor** and several **councillors**, collectively called **council members**.

Council size varies from 5 to 11 members depending on the population. A municipal council makes decisions collectively, meaning that it is not individual council members but rather the council as a whole, based on a majority vote, that decides and acts for the municipality.

Municipal councils appoint one or more members of their elected councils to sit as representatives on their respective regional board (**regional district directors**). In unincorporated areas, **electoral area directors** are elected directly by the people. The representatives of Treaty First Nations are selected from their own governing body, also called regional district directors.

The head of a regional district board of directors is called the **chair**. The chair is chosen by a vote of the members of the regional district board of directors. Collectively, the regional district board is the governing body of the regional district. It has authority to make decisions through resolutions and by-laws, consistent with the purposes of the regional district.

REGIONAL DISTRICTS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberni-Clayoquot • Bulkley-Nechako • Capital • Cariboo • Central Coast • Central Kootenay • Central Okanagan • Columbia Shuswap • Comox Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowichan Valley • East Kootenay • Fraser Valley • Fraser-Fort George • Kitimat-Stikine • Kootenay Boundary • Metro Vancouver • Mount Waddington • Nanaimo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Coast • North Okanagan • Okanagan-Similkameen • Peace River • qathet Regional District • Squamish-Lillooet • Strathcona • Sunshine Coast • Thompson-Nicola |
|---|---|--|

MUNICIPALITIES

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbotsford • Armstrong • Burnaby • Campbell River • Castlegar • Chilliwack • Colwood • Coquitlam • Courtenay • Cranbrook • Dawson Creek • Delta • Duncan • Enderby • Fernie • Fort St. John • Grand Forks • Greenwood • Kamloops • Kelowna • Kimberley • Langford • Langley • Maple Ridge • Merritt • Mission • Nanaimo • Nelson • New Westminster • North Vancouver • Parksville • Penticton • Pitt Meadows • Port Alberni • Port Coquitlam • Port Moody • Powell River • Prince George • Prince Rupert • Quesnel • Revelstoke | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond • Rossland • Salmon Arm • Surrey • Terrace • Trail • Vancouver • Vernon • Victoria • White Rock • Williams Lake • 100 Mile House • Barriere • Central Saanich • Chetwynd • Clearwater • Coldstream • Elkford • Fort St. James • Highlands • Hope • Houston • Hudson's Hope • Invermere • Kent • Kitimat • Lake Country • Lantzville • Lillooet • Logan Lake • Mackenzie • Metchosin • New Hazelton • North Cowichan • North Saanich • North Vancouver • Oak Bay • Peachland • Port Edward • Port Hardy • Saanich | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sechelt • Sechelt Indian Government • District • Sicamous • Sooke • Sparwood • Squamish • Stewart • Summerland • Taylor • Tofino • Tumbler Ridge • Ucluelet • Vanderhoof • Wells • West Kelowna • West Vancouver • Bowen Island • Sun Peaks • Northern Rockies • Whistler • Comox • Creston • Gibsons • Golden • Ladysmith • Lake Cowichan • Oliver • Osoyoos • Port McNeill • Princeton • Qualicum Beach • Sidney • Smithers • View Royal • Esquimalt • Langley • Spallumcheen • Lumby • Alert Bay • Anmore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashcroft • Belcarra • Burns Lake • Cache Creek • Canal Flats • Chase • Clinton • Cumberland • Fraser Lake • Fruitvale • Gold River • Granisle • Harrison Hot Springs • Hazelton • Kaslo • Keremeos • Lions Bay • Lytton • Masset • McBride • Midway • Montrose • Nakusp • New Denver • Pemberton • Port Alice • Port Clements • Pouce Coupe • Queen Charlotte • Radium Hot Springs • Salmo • Sayward • Silverton • Slocan • Tahsis • Telkwa • Valemount • Warfield • Zeballos |
|---|---|--|---|

ACTIVITY 5.1: Investigating Our Municipality

Using our municipality's website, Wikipedia, Google Maps and other online sources, fill in the information below.





Municipality name:	Associated Regional District:
Population:	Class of Municipality:
Three interesting facts about our municipality:	
Two major landforms or waterways within our municipality:	
Three ways that the physical environment influences life or work within our community:	
Number of positions on our municipal council:	
Describe two recent announcements by the municipality and analyze who will be affected:	

ACTIVITY 5.2: Investigating Our Community

Using our regional district's website, Wikipedia, Google Maps and other online sources, fill in the information below.

Community name:	Regional District:
Population:	Other communities in the regional district:
Two interesting facts about our community:	
Two major landforms or waterways within our community:	
Three ways that the physical environment influences life or work within our community:	
Describe two recent announcements by the regional district and analyze who will be affected:	

ACTIVITY 5.3: Plan of Action for our Community

 THE FOCUS: What is the issue you want to address? What do you want to improve?	
 FACTORS: What are the underlying factors or causes related to the issue? Why is this an issue that matters to you?	
 THE PLAN: What actions could be taken to improve the issue? How could the municipality or regional district help? How could community members help?	
 OUTCOMES: Who from the community would benefit and how? Would anyone be negatively impacted? If so, how?	

Lesson 6

Local Elections



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 **How are municipal council members or electoral area directors chosen?**
- 2 **How do voters decide who to vote for?**
- 3 **Which candidate(s) do I support and why?**

OVERVIEW

Elections are contests of leadership, ideas, politics and power, where interested individuals campaign for your support and ultimately your vote.

In this lesson, students will learn about local government elections in British Columbia and the different election races in their community. Students will engage in the inquiry process to investigate factors when making their voting decision and to guide their research into the candidates. Afterwards, students share their candidate research with the rest of the class for analysis. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the research process and what is most important to them when making their decision.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- explain the process for local government elections;
- explore different ways to research and compare the candidates;
- develop an investigation plan to research the candidates running for election;
- compare and contrast the candidates and their viewpoints.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class.

Supplies/Needs

- Slide Deck 6
- Access or copies of 6.1
- Online templates for all activities and any videos and slide decks are available on the project website

Starter

1. Introduce the upcoming local elections and the Student Vote program.
 - Local elections in British Columbia are held every four years on the third Saturday in October.
 - The next general local election will be held on Saturday October 15, 2022.
 - Throughout the province, voters will elect individuals to sit on their municipal council or regional district board, as well as their board of education (Lesson 7).
 - Elementary and high school students will also have an opportunity to learn about the election process and practice voting through a program called Student Vote.
2. Watch the "Student Vote Vancouver" video to hear students and teachers speak about their experience with the program for the 2018 local elections.
3. As a class, co-create a list of learning goals (knowledge and skills) that students want to achieve by the time they cast their Student Vote ballot. Keep this list posted in the classroom for the duration of the program.

Activities

1. Through a 'Placemat' activity, have students answer the question: What qualities or skills should an elected representative have?

This cooperative learning strategy allows students to think about, record, share their ideas in groups and then reach a consensus.

- a) You can provide each group with one large sheet of paper divided into sections (one for each student and a centre block for the final group list).
- b) Ask students to respond to the question within their allotted space. Provide time for each student to share their recorded responses with the rest of their group without discussion or debate from the other students.

- c) Next, have each group decide, collectively, on the five most important qualities and record them in the centre of the placemat — it is essential that all group members agree on the top five items.
 - d) Ask groups to decide, collectively, on the five most important/significant qualities and record them in the centre of the placemat — it is important that all group members agree on the top five qualities and skills.
 - e) Have each group's share their top five with the rest of the class.
2. Review the process for local government elections in British Columbia. You can use Slide Deck 6 as a starting point and add specific information about the election races where you live (the name and number of positions).

TEACHER NOTE

With the exception of Lake Country, councillors and mayors are elected at-large, by all voters in the municipality.

3. Find out which candidates are running for election in your area. Show students where they can find this information by visiting your local government's website.
4. On a blackboard or whiteboard, write down the following question: How should we decide who to vote for?

Through a class discussion, generate questions to frame this decision. For example:

- Why do they want to be on council?
- Would they make a good leader or council member?
- What issues in our community matter to me? Do they matter to the candidates?
- What ideas or goals do the candidates have for our community?

5. Divide students into pairs or small groups to research the candidates running for election.

Co-create an investigation plan or checklist for developing a candidate profile and determine how the information will be presented (e.g., poster, slide deck, video, mock Instagram profile).

Sample research profile:

- Name and photo
- Reason for running (Why do they want the job?)
- Personal information (e.g., education, career, accomplishments)
- Priorities (What issues are most important to the candidate?)
- Goals (What do they want to achieve?)

Review different ways that you can collect information about the candidates (e.g., candidate websites and social media pages, web searches, news media, candidate debates or town halls, discussion with family and friends). Tell students they can even contact the candidates directly and ask them what they want to know.

TEACHER NOTE

If your municipality has election slates, consider focusing on the mayoral candidates and party platforms to reduce the amount of work.

6. Have each group share their candidate profile with the rest of the class through a presentation or Gallery Walk. Students can make notes on all the candidates using Activity 6.1.

Consolidation

Have a brief closing discussion about the candidates and the process of becoming an informed voter, or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions:

- Do you feel ready to vote? How did your research help you decide who you might vote for?
- Which factors do you think are most important when deciding who you will vote for?
- What else do you want to know about the candidates or the election process?

Extended Learning

You can also consider inviting candidates to visit your class/school or organizing a candidates' debate (Handout 6.2). Alternatively, you can use the candidate's website or news reports to find the answers or analyze how the candidate may respond to the questions. You can assign each group a candidate and have them share their research and responses with the rest of the class.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	Can students generate learning goals for the Student Vote program?
Activities	<p>Can students generate a list of qualities or skills they would like to see in their elected representative? Can students collectively agree on the top skills/qualities?</p> <p>Can students identify different considerations when deciding for whom to vote?</p> <p>Can students identify what is important to them or their community and help them narrow their research?</p> <p>Can students design a research plan that supports their inquiry? Can they identify trustworthy sources of information?</p> <p>Are students presenting information that is accurate and informative?</p> <p>Can students assess their learning and what they might do differently in the future?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Do students recognize that research can make it easier to reach a decision?</p> <p>Do students understand different considerations when making voting decisions?</p> <p>Do they feel more prepared to vote in the future?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the concept of elected representatives using other CIVIX video resources ("Elected Representatives" and/or "Levels of Government"). Provide access to key terms in advance. Use ability grouping to support students. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can enhance their understanding by comparing local elections to provincial or federal elections. Encourage them to take note of similarities and differences. Alternatively, they could compare local elections to those in other countries.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow students to compare electoral systems and especially municipal leadership positions to their home region and in their primary language. Provide access to key terms in advance.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the diversity of the candidates running in your municipality and discuss the need for diversity in politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government in Metro Vancouver is 90% white — but it doesn't have to stay that way: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/metro-vancouver-diversity-solutions-2020-1.5620528 Women in Politics: https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/women-politics/ Refugees in Politics: https://www.vicnews.com/news/canada-declares-victoria-councillor-a-noteworthy-historical-figure/
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Placemat' activity for the <i>Starter</i> activity can be conducted using the Google Doc available online or using a 'Think-Pair-Share' strategy. If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming. Provide mobility accommodations for any activities that require movement. Coordinate virtual Q&A sessions with the candidates in place of in-person candidate debates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

General local elections in British Columbia are held every four years on the third Saturday in October. The next general local elections will be held on Saturday, October 15, 2022. British Columbians will elect their municipal council members, or if they live in an unincorporated area, they will elect their electoral area director, as well as other positions such as Park Board representatives and Island Trust trustees. (The Islands Trust is a federated body responsible for protecting the unique nature and amenities of 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands and the surrounding waters in the southern Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound.)

An individual who seeks public office or competes for the job of elected representative is called a **candidate**. It is their job to share their goals, ideas and commitment to the job in order to win the support of voters during a campaign.

In some of the larger municipalities in the province, such as Vancouver,

Surrey and Richmond, candidates may belong to a political party or election slate. A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared vision and similar political beliefs whose intention is to achieve power through an election and create meaningful political change. An **election slate** is a group of candidates that run in multi-seat elections on a common platform.

British Columbia municipalities use a system called **First-Past-The-Post** (FPTP). A successful candidate must receive the most votes in order to be elected. In a mayoral race, only a single candidate wins because there is only one position. Whereas, in a multi-member race, where five councillors are elected **at large**, it is the five candidates with the most votes that win a seat on council.

Across all municipalities, there may be ten or more candidates running for a position on council, depending on the race.

Conversely, a candidate is elected by **acclamation** if they have no opponents, or if the number of candidates match the number of council members to be elected. In that case, no vote is held for that race.

To become a candidate in a local government election in British Columbia, you must be 18 years of age or older on general voting day; be a Canadian citizen, have been a resident of British Columbia for at least six months prior to filing nomination documents; and, not be disqualified under the *Local Government Act* or any other enactment from being nominated for, being elected to or holding office, or be otherwise disqualified by law.

There are many ways to gather information about the election candidates. Community groups hold town hall meetings or all-candidate debates where citizens are invited to listen to candidates speak on the issues and ask them questions. Information can also be found on radio and television, media websites or in newspapers and local magazines. Individuals may also visit campaign offices, attend campaign events or have a chance to talk to candidates when they visit homes during door to door canvassing. Information may also be accessible online through candidate websites and social media pages.

ACTIVITY 6.1: Graphic Organizer – Getting to Know the Candidates

Fill out the graphic organizer below with information about the candidates running for election.

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITY ISSUES	
GOALS OR IDEAS	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITY ISSUES	
GOALS OR IDEAS	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITY ISSUES	
GOALS OR IDEAS	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITY ISSUES	
GOALS OR IDEAS	

HANDOUT 6.2: A Framework for Organizing an All-Candidates' Debate

It is important when hosting an event at your school that things are run professionally and efficiently. Consider the following as you arrange your event. Check your school district's policy before planning.



PREPARATION:

- Decide on a time, date and location.
- Invite all candidates running in one or more of your local election races (mayor or council) to participate in the meeting/debate.
- Determine if the event will be held in-person or virtually.
- Consider videotaping, podcasting and/or live-streaming the event to share with other schools in your municipality.
- Work with school staff to set up audio equipment and seating, if applicable.
- Recruit a moderator (teacher, student, community leader or journalist).



QUESTIONS:

- Determine the timing for questions and answers and whether all, some or one candidate will respond.
- Plan questions in advance and encourage other classes to submit questions to increase interest and engagement. Consider both personal and policy questions (e.g., Why did you decide to run? What makes you qualified for the job? How will you improve the community? What is your number one priority if elected?)

TIP:

Create a digital form to share with teachers across the school. Each class can contribute questions through the form or collaborate doc. Ask teachers to note student names next to the questions when possible.

- Once the questions have been selected, confirm which students will ask the questions.



FORMAT:

- Use a combination of short (i.e., 30 seconds) and longer responses (i.e., 2 minutes each). Make sure that the time limits are announced and monitored with a stopwatch.
- Establish an agenda and guidelines for the meeting to share with candidates and participating classes.
- Below is a suggested framework:
 - a) **Introduction** – The moderator should welcome the audience, introduce the candidates and detail the structure of the meeting (3 minutes).
 - b) **Opening statements** – Brief introductory statements from the candidates (2 minutes each).
 - c) **Planned questions** – Ask the pre-determined questions to the candidates (25-30 minutes).
 - d) **Open questions** – Give the audience an opportunity to ask final questions to specific candidates (10-15 minutes).
 - e) **Closing statements** – Final words from the candidates (1-2 minutes each).
 - f) **Thank you** – Plan a formal thank you from designated students (2 minutes).



ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEBATE:

- Ensure a respectful, neutral and non-partisan environment.
- If a candidate declines, cancels or does not show up, respect their campaign schedule and ensure that students are aware that the candidate is running in the election but is unable to attend.
- Communicate expectations regarding behaviour and participation.
- You can invite parents/guardians or members from the community, but non student audience members should NOT ask questions.
- Have students take notes during the debate to review the next class.
- If possible, provide time for students to talk with the candidates after the meeting and offer some refreshments.

Lesson 7

School Trustees



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do the decisions made by our school district affect me?
- 2 How can I evaluate the school trustee candidates?

OVERVIEW

School trustees in British Columbia aim to improve student achievement based on the diverse needs, priorities and unique educational requirements of the communities they represent.

In this lesson, students learn about the role of school trustees and the process for collective decision-making. Students create an ideal profile of a school trustee and then research the candidates independently or collectively. In the *Consolidation* activity, students analyze their evaluation criteria and make recommendations for their family members about the research process.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- explain the role of school districts and school trustees;
- identify the qualities they would like to see in their ideal school trustee;
- research the candidates running for election; and
- analyze their evaluation criteria and make a decision about who to support and why.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.

Supplies/Needs

- Slide Deck 7
- Access to or copies of 7.1 and 7.2
- Any videos, slide decks, handouts and activity sheets in Word and Google Doc can be found on the project website

Starter

1. Introduce the idea that a school district manages the public schools in their community, or several communities within their region. Ask students if they know the name of their school district.
2. Use an adapted 'Focusing Four' protocol to discuss ideas for the following scenario.

The health and well-being of students has worsened over the last few years. The provincial government has agreed to provide additional money to school districts to help improve the situation. The school districts must decide how they will spend the money in their schools in order to support the health and well-being of students in their community.

Divide students into groups of five or six and follow the steps below. One student will act as facilitator per group.

- a) **Brainstorm:** Have each group brainstorm ideas on chart paper. There should be no debate or critique during this stage.
 - b) **Clarify:** Invite group members to ask questions about any of the ideas. The student who put forth the idea should clarify their thinking as needed.
 - c) **Advocate:** Ask students to express which ideas they support and why. Statements should be positive in nature. Students can advocate for as many ideas as they like.
 - d) **Canvass:** Have students vote with a show of hands which ideas they like best. The goal is to come to a consensus on one idea.
3. Have each group share their agreed upon idea with the rest of the class and debrief on the activity.
 - What are the opportunities and challenges in making collective decisions?
 - How can you try to persuade others to agree with your ideas?
 - Why is it important to be respectful and keep an open mind when listening to others' opinions?

Activities

1. Use Slide Deck 7 to review the role and responsibilities of school trustees.
 - School trustees provide a link between local communities and the school district, bringing the issues and concerns of their communities to school board discussions and decision-making. A school trustee is a member of a team. Under the *School Act*, the trustee's power lies in membership on the board of education. This means that the board has the authority to make decisions or to take action; individual trustees in and of themselves do not have this authority.
2. As a class, review key information about your school district and trustees using your school district's website.
 - Which municipalities and/or rural areas are included in our school district? (Use a map as a visual aid)
 - How many schools are in our school district?
 - How many school trustees sit on our board of education?
 - How many trustee electoral areas are there within the school district?
 - What is our school's electoral area?
 - How many school trustees are elected in our electoral area?

TEACHER NOTE

Find more info about district boundaries on the BC Government website at [Education and training > Kindergarten to Grade 12 > Administration > Legislation and policy > School Trustee Election Procedures](#)

3. Divide students into pairs or small groups and have them brainstorm the characteristics of an 'ideal' school trustee and write them on Activity 7.1. Guiding questions:
 - What personal characteristics would I like to see in my school trustee?
 - What skills or work experience would they have?
 - What is their motivation to become a school trustee?
 - What would be their educational priorities?
4. Review the list of candidates running for school trustee by consulting your municipality, regional district and/or school district website. Focus on your school's electoral area.

5. Ask students to learn about the candidates using candidate websites and social media pages, online searches or by contacting the candidates directly. This can be completed through a jigsaw method or you can assign each group one candidate to research and have them present to the rest of the class.

Students should compile their notes using Activity 7.1. You may need to provide multiple copies depending on the number of candidates.

Alternative Activity

If your school trustee was acclaimed, invite them into your class for a discussion about the opportunities and challenges within the school district. Have students prepare questions in advance.

Consolidation

Ask students to analyze the candidates and reflect on their learning by responding to the prompts on Activity 7.2.

- What is most important to you when evaluating the trustee candidates and deciding who to vote for? Why?
- What advice would you give your family members about learning about the school trustee candidates?

Extended Learning

Ask students to reflect on what they would like to change or improve about the school experience for students and have them find a way to articulate this message to their newly elected school trustee. This can be in the form of a letter, speech or other oral presentation, slide deck or multi-media piece.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students clearly articulate their opinions and ideas in a persuasive manner?</p> <p>Are students working collaboratively to reach a final decision?</p> <p>Can students identify the opportunities and challenges with group decision-making?</p>
Activities	<p>Do students understand the role and importance of school trustees?</p> <p>Are students thinking critically about the qualities and skills needed for the role of school trustees?</p> <p>Are students able to summarize accurate information about the candidates?</p> <p>Can students identify a strong vs weak candidate?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Can students explain what is important to them when evaluating the candidates?</p> <p>Can students analyze the research process and provide advice to family members?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use ability grouping to help students conduct research on school trustees. • Allow students to present their information in various ways (orally, written, only to the teacher). <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to contact the candidates and ask three questions about their most pressing concerns. Have students report the responses back to the class.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Encourage students to compare the education system in British Columbia to the one of their home country. This can help with a deeper understanding of the institutions.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the emphasis many First Nations groups place on consensus decision-making.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

British Columbia's **school districts** operate the province's publicly funded schools and administer the funding they receive from the provincial government.

The province is divided into 60 school districts and each district represents a designated geographic area or, in the case of francophone education, the province as a whole.

Each school district has a group of locally elected representatives known as **school trustees** who are the members of the **board of education** (also known as the **school board**). British Columbians elect their boards of education to improve student achievement according to the diverse needs, priorities and unique educational requirements of the communities they represent.

As a locally elected representative, the trustee's role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being, and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire district while representing the interests of their local area. School trustees listen to their constituents, guide the work of their school district and set plans, policies and the annual budget. Reflecting the strength of local representation, boards report back to their communities on how students are doing. Boards are directly accountable to the people they serve.

The board of education is responsible for operating their respective school district based on the educational goals of their local communities and in accordance with the general direction established by the provincial government. The respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and boards of education are described in the *School Act* and these include:

- Attending meetings;
- Setting local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools;
- Employing the staff necessary for school district operations;
- Establishing conditions of employment for employees;
- Preparing and approving the school district's operating budgets and capital plans; and
- Hearing appeals from parents and students where a staff decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student.

A school trustee is a member of a team. Under the *School Act*, the trustee's power lies in membership on the board of education. This means that the board has the authority to make decisions or to take action; individual trustees in and of themselves do not have this authority.

School trustees are elected every four years during local elections. Each school district is composed of one or more **electoral areas** from which trustees are elected.

The composition of the boards (number of trustees, trustee electoral areas, number of trustees elected from each trustee electoral area) varies to reflect the communities and the population of each school district in the province.

In some school districts, all trustees are elected at large. This means that there is only one electoral area (the entire school district) from which all trustees are elected. In other school districts, there are multiple electoral areas.

There may be more than one trustee elected from each electoral area. Some electoral areas may be composed of: one or more municipalities; a combination of municipalities and rural areas, or rural areas only.

Local governments and boards of education may cooperate on the running of elections. Some trustee elections may be conducted by a municipality or regional district.

Therefore, information will be available and nominations filed in the local government office instead of, or as well as, the school district office.

Following the election, the trustees elect one of their members to act as **chair** of the board.

Independent schools have their own Independent School Authorities and are not under the jurisdiction of public school boards.

ACTIVITY 7.1: Who Will Make a Good School Trustee?

Create a profile for your ideal school trustee. Afterwards research the candidates running for election and determine which most closely resembles your ideal candidate.

QUALITIES		SCHOOL TRUSTEE CANDIDATES			
Personal Characteristics					
Work Experience, Education and Skills					
Educational Priorities					
What is their motivation to become a school trustee?					

ACTIVITY 7.2: Evaluating School Trustee Candidates

<p>What is most important to you when evaluating the trustee candidates and deciding who to vote for? Why?</p>	
<p>What advice would you give your family members about learning about school trustee candidates?</p>	

<p>What is most important to you when evaluating the trustee candidates and deciding who to vote for? Why?</p>	
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Lesson 8

The Voting Process



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Is voting in elections important?
- 2 Why do we vote by secret ballot?
- 3 How do I vote in local elections?

OVERVIEW

The right to vote comes with the responsibility to vote in an informed and purposeful manner.

In this lesson, students analyze different reasons for voting in elections. Students review essential information about voter eligibility and when, where and how people vote in local elections. Afterwards, they practice voting and counting ballots through a mock vote. To consolidate their knowledge, students create a poster or pamphlet detailing how to vote or to encourage their family and friends to vote in the upcoming elections.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- analyze reasons for voting in elections;
- describe when, where and how to vote in local elections; and,
- use effective communication skills and persuasive language when trying to convince others.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use or adapt the activities in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- Show students a Student Vote ballot for your municipality or regional district so they know what to expect on Student Vote Day. Please refer to your ballot package.
- Be sensitive to issues at home that may challenge perspectives around voting and democratic participation, such as religion or traditions.
- Recognize and acknowledge barriers that inhibit individuals or groups from voting (e.g., negative history, socio-economic class, language, newcomers).

Supplies/Needs

- “Why Voting Matters” video
- Index cards for students
- Internet access
- Slide Deck 8
- Access or copies of 8.1
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found on the project website

Starter

Save the last word

1. Distribute one index card to each student. Introduce the activity by posing the following question: Does voting matter?
2. Watch the “Why Voting Matters” video and ask students to select one quote or reason for voting that stood out to them. They should write down the quote or reason on the index card. You may want to play the video twice in order to support this selection.
3. Ask students to explain why they chose the reason they did from the video by writing an explanation on the back of the card (e.g., what it meant to them, reminded them of, how it connects to prior learning).
4. Divide students into groups of three. Invite one student to read their chosen reason to rest of their group. Then ask the other two students to discuss the reason. What do they think it means? Why do they think these words might be important? After a few minutes, ask the student to read the back of their index card or to explain why they picked the reason. Repeat until each student has a turn.

Activities

1. Using Slide Deck 8, discover some of the key aspects of voting in local elections.
 - Why do we vote by secret ballot?
 - Who is able to vote in local elections?
 - Who organizes local elections in BC?
 - What are different ways a person can cast their ballot?
 - How do I mark my ballot?
2. Organize a mock vote with your class. You can use the ballot sample provided (Activity 8.1) or create your own ballots (physical or digital).
 - a) Show students how to fill out a ballot correctly. It is important to demonstrate that there are sometimes different rules for different races. Students can use a checkmark, X, or any other mark as long as it clearly indicates their choice(s). Remind students that they must follow the rules for each race – if only two choices are permitted, you cannot vote for three candidates.
 - b) Set-up a polling station with one voting screen and one ballot box in a location in your classroom.
 - c) Distribute the ballots and invite each student to go behind the voting screen to mark their ballot. Afterwards, ask them to re-fold their ballot to ensure privacy and place it in the ballot box.
3. Review the ballot terms ‘accepted’ and ‘rejected’.

Accepted: A ballot that is clearly marked for the correct number of candidates (or less).

Rejected: A ballot that cannot be counted because the choice was not clear or more options were selected than permitted.
4. Divide students into small groups and ask them to review and count a portion of the ballots from the mock vote. They should count one section (race) at a time. One person should show the ballot to the rest of the group and as a group, they should decide whether should be ‘accepted’ or ‘rejected’. One person should be selected to tally the votes.
5. Add up the results from each group and announce the results.
6. Have a whole-class discussion and answer any remaining questions about the voting process.
 - Do you think voting is easy or challenging? Why?
 - Do you feel ready to vote in the Student Vote election? Why or why not?
 - What other questions do you have about voting?

Consolidation

Have students demonstrate their knowledge by creating a poster or pamphlet about how to vote or to encourage people to vote in the upcoming elections. It could be designed for a parent, guardian, or an adult they know to encourage participation in the elections. This could also be done in a digital poster format, or as a video.

Ideas for possible content:

- List the qualifications to vote in local elections;
- Describe different ways you can cast your ballot (when/how);
- List the steps to cast your ballot;
- Make a pitch with reasons for voting.

Co-create criteria with your class. Sample criteria for a poster/pamphlet is below.

- The tagline and/or graphics are used to capture interest.
- Headings are meaningful and appropriate
- Information is helpful or accurate (e.g., date, eligibility requirements)



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students identify a reason for voting that is meaningful to them and explain their choice?</p> <p>Are students actively listening?</p> <p>Can students analyze different reasons for voting?</p>
Activities	<p>Are students able to understand the reason for voting in private?</p> <p>Can students explain who is qualified to vote?</p> <p>Are students accurately casting a ballot?</p> <p>Can students evaluate an accepted ballot and tally the votes?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Can students communicate an accurate and informative voting pitch to family members or peers that demonstrates new knowledge?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., secret ballot, voting location, general voting day, advance voting, rejected ballot). • Share the “Why Voting Matters” video before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during videos. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities — Have students conduct research into the roles of different election officials (see Election Manual) or design a plan for organizing Student Vote Day at your school.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., secret ballot, voting location, general voting day, advance voting, rejected ballot). • Share the “Why Voting Matters” video before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that new immigrants, adults who have difficulty reading, language learners, persons who are homeless, newly arrived refugees, and other specific groups may face challenges understanding or accessing the voting process. • Keep the focus on ideas to increase access and the benefits our society gets from hearing different voices, not only on the disadvantages these groups face.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Every four years, voters across British Columbia decide who will represent their interests and lead their communities by electing the members of their municipal councils or regional district boards, school boards, parks boards or the Island Trust board.

The provincial government sets out common rules that all voters and candidates must follow. However, municipalities and regional districts are responsible for conducting the elections. Every municipality and regional district has a chief election officer who is in charge of running the election.

To be eligible to vote in the [local government elections](#) as a **resident or non-resident property elector**, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older when you register to vote, or 18 years or older on general voting day;
- Be a Canadian citizen;
- Have been a resident of B. C. for at least six months before you register to vote;
- Have either lived or owned property in the jurisdiction in which they intend to vote for at least 30 days before you register to vote; and
- Not be disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment, or by law from voting in a local election.

To be eligible to vote in a [school trustee election](#) in British Columbia, you must:

- Qualify either as a resident elector or a non-resident property elector;
- Be registered or deemed to be registered as an elector of the trustee electoral area; and
- Not be disqualified under the School Act, or other enactment or law, from voting in the election.

A person is not permitted to vote more than once in a trustee election for any one school district. *The School Act*

stipulates that a person may be the resident of only one trustee electoral area at a time, that being the area where the person lives, or if absent, where the person intends to return.

If you want to vote for the francophone education authority, you must be a member of the Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF) in addition to meeting the other requirements of a resident or non-resident property elector. You do not need to have a child in the school system to become a member of the CSF.

A local government must maintain and use its own list of electors if advance registration is available, unless it has adopted a by-law to implement same-day voter registration, or use the provincial voters list managed by Elections BC.

The local government-maintained **voters list** includes the names of resident electors and the names of non-resident property electors, whereas the provincial voters list only includes resident electors.

A resident elector is required to show two pieces of identification or sign a solemn declaration if their name does not already appear on the voters list. Non-resident property electors are required to register at the time of voting and show two pieces of identification, as well as the title of the property in relation to which they are voting. Contact your local government for more information about the voters list.

During the election period, you can find your voting place on your municipality or regional district website and through documentation mailed to voters.

Electors who are away, busy or unable to vote on voting day, have the option of participating in **advance voting**. One advance voting opportunity must be held 10 days prior to voting day. However, more advance voting days may be available. Please consult with your own municipality or regional district to find out how this works for your area.

Each municipality is responsible for conducting their election and determining the methods used. Options can include voting in person, by mail or through special voting opportunities held in hospitals, long-term care facilities or other locations where electors' mobility may be impaired. Please consult with your own municipality to find out how this works for your area.

Here are the basic steps to casting a ballot:

1. Once you confirm your eligibility, you are given a ballot.
2. Go behind a voting screen and mark your ballot.
3. Hand your folded ballot back to the voting clerk.
4. Your ballot is recorded and counted.

A **ballot** lists the names of the candidates running for each position in your local elections. There is a space beside each candidate's name on the ballot. You can mark your ballot with an X, shade the circle or use a checkmark. As long as you appropriately mark the ballot for your preferences and according to the number of choices, your votes will be counted.

Regarding the number of choices, if six council members are elected at large, you can vote for up to six candidates. Alternatively, if only one candidate is elected in a given race, you can only vote for one candidate. You can only vote for one type of school trustee (for your school district/electoral area, or for the francophone educational authority).

A **rejected ballot** is declared invalid by the voting officer because it was not properly marked. For example, the voter selected more than the number of candidates they were allowed to choose. In the case of local elections, one race or section may be declared valid and another may be deemed invalid.

A **spoiled ballot** is kept separate and never placed in the ballot box because it was mistakenly marked or torn and exchanged for a new ballot.

ACTIVITY 8.1: Democracy for Lunch!

Let's have democracy for lunch! We need to plan the menu for our next field trip. Mark your choices below following the directions and tally the results.

1: MAIN COURSE (SELECT ONE)	
PIZZA SLICE	
CHEESEBURGER	
SUSHI	
TACOS	
GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH	

2: SIDE DISHES (SELECT TWO)	
FRENCH FRIES	
GARLIC BREAD	
COLESLAW	
ROASTED VEGETABLES	
FRUIT SLICES	

3: DRINK (SELECT ONE)	
POP	
JUICE	
ICED TEA	
CHOCOLATE MILK	
BOTTLE OF WATER	

